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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM 60-22

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(1)

Civilian and Military Factors as Predictors of Army Failure

NOVEMBER 1960



PERSONNEL RESEARCH BRANCH

Research and Development Division
The Adjutant General's Office
Department of the Army

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Retention Standards a-11

9 Research Memorandum 60-22

6 CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FACTORS
AS PREDICTORS OF ARMY FAILURE

10 Walter A. Klieger and A. U. Dubuisson

Submitted by

Edmund F. Fuchs, Chief
Research Group I

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JOB

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF ARMY FAILURE

PURPOSE

The Retention Standards Task was established to develop means for the early identification of enlisted men whose overall cumulative record in the Army is likely to prove unacceptable even though they meet standards for entry into the service.

Current enlistment and induction standards are based primarily upon cognitive measures (e.g., the AFQT and ACB tests) and physical profile. The basic approach of the RETENTION STANDARDS Task seeks to supplement these measures with valid indices principally of a non-cognitive nature, such as background characteristics, personality tests, and character and behavior measures. Since the overall objective of the Task is the development of predictors of failure early in basic training, and ultimately upon entrance into the service, it was deemed worthwhile to study civilian background factors as potential predictors of early failure. Thus, when additional data on a 1953-1954 Basic Training sample (Morton, Goldstein, Houston, and Bayroff, 1957) were collected for the validation of the Basic Military Proficiency Test against type of discharge (Retention Standards Project a-01), a number of civilian background factors were also included. Some of these variables, such as age and medical history, were analyzed along with the Basic Military Proficiency Test under the a-01 project. However, data on many of the variables were left for analysis in the present exploratory study. The inclusion of a large number of background variables as experimental predictors--many unlikely to be of predictive value--would only serve to add unnecessary length to forthcoming projects in the retention area. Results from the present study of the Ft. Leonard Wood data were expected to be of value in selecting those variables most likely to be useful predictors for inclusion in more comprehensive studies of retention.

Another purpose of the present study was to attempt to answer several questions related to the type-of-discharge criterion. For example, how do various discharge categories fit into the criterion? Do men with general discharges resemble those with honorable discharges on behavior indices as opposed to men with dishonorable discharges?

SAMPLES

A total of 2209 enlisted men were used for the study. The group entered basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, from September 1953 through October 1954. Criterion and predictor data were collected in 1957. Over 50% of the group were classified as low-mental-level individuals on

the basis of receiving scores below 75 on Aptitude Area III of the ACB.
The group was broken down into four basic samples as follows:

1. RA Caucasians (N = 359)
2. US Caucasians (N = 1261)
3. RA Negroes (N = 128)
4. US Negroes (N = 461)

VARIABLES

1. Type-of-discharge
 - Honorable with no courts-martial
 - Honorable with courts-martial
 - General with no courts-martial
 - General with courts-martial
 - Undesirable
2. Grade at Discharge
 - E-1
 - E-2
 - E-3
 - E-4
 - E-5 and 6
3. Civilian Trade or Occupation
 - Mechanical
 - Laborer
 - Service trade
 - Farm Laborer
 - Student
 - Other
 - Unemployed or none
4. Length of Experience in Months
5. Average Weekly Wage

6. Convicted of Felony
7. Youthful Offender (RA only)
8. Imprisoned For Crime (RA only)
9. Suspended Sentence (RA only)
10. Service Preference
11. Marital Status
12. Change in Marital Status (During term of service)
13. Number of Dependents
14. Psychiatric Appraisal ("S" Category of PULHES)
15. Number of Physical Complaints of Psychosomatic Nature
16. Academic Grade Completed
17. Physical Category (PULHES)

ANALYSIS

The percentage of each sample falling into each discharge category was computed. The results are shown in Table 1. Frequency distributions of grade at discharge and all predictor variables were obtained for the total group by discharge category. The distributions are reported in Table 2.

RESULTS

P-value splits for the general and unfavorable categories were small for all samples (Table 1). Distribution of grade at discharge, studied as a possible alternative criterion, indicated that most men leaving the Army at the higher grades received honorable discharges, but that among men in the lower grades there was considerable spread over discharge categories. When the predictor variables were distributed within discharge category, the number and percentage of men within many cells were extremely small, particularly in unfavorable categories. For this reason, and because of the disproportionate distribution of mental ability in the group, results were generally more useful in indicating the plausibility of hypotheses than in identifying useful predictors. In the case of all items on pre-service disciplinary record, for example, direction of the data indicated that men who enter the Army with some record of law infraction are more likely to receive unfavorable discharges than those whose records are clear. Preservice discipline, then, and other selected background variables, will be included in further Retention Standard studies, perhaps as items in personal history forms.

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF TYPE OF DISCHARGE IN THE FOUR SAMPLES
AND IN THE TOTAL GROUP

DISCHARGE CATEGORY	SAMPLES									
	Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4		Total Group	
	Caucasian		Caucasian		Negro		Negro			
	RA		US		RA		US			
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Hon-No CM	235	65	1170	93	73	57	358	78	1836	83
Hon-With CM	65	18	55	4	26	20	58	13	204	9
Gen-No CM	12	3	9	1	2	2	11	2	34	2
Gen-With CM	9	3	6	-	5	4	9	2	29	1
Unfavorable	38	11	21	2	22	17	25	5	106	5
	359	100%	1261	100%	128	100%	461	100%	2200	100%

Table 2

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF MEN WITHIN EACH VARIABLE CATEGORY BY TYPE OF DISCHARGE

Variable	Honorable		Hon.-CM		General		Gen.-CM		Unfav.		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2. Grade												
E-1	33	20	18	11	3	2	11	6	103	61	168	100
E-2	159	56	80	28	25	9	16	6	2	1	282	100
E-3	673	89	74	10	4	1	2	-	-	-	753	100
E-4	889	97	30	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	921	100
E-5 and 6	79	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79	100
3. Civilian Occupation												
Mechanical	159	82	18	9	4	2	3	2	10	5	194	100
Laborer	621	78	94	12	14	2	14	2	52	6	795	100
Service Trade	32	75	4	9	1	2	-	-	6	14	43	100
Farm Laborer	469	91	28	5	6	1	4	1	8	2	515	100
Student	73	82	9	10	1	1	2	2	4	5	89	100
Other	200	87	17	7	2	1	2	1	10	4	231	100
Unemployed or none	83	84	10	10	1	1	1	1	4	4	99	100
4. Length of Exp.												
11 Months or Less	982	82	113	9	22	2	19	2	63	5	1199	100
12 Months or More	791	85	75	8	10	1	10	1	42	5	928	100
5. Av. Weekly Wage (RA only)												
\$49 or Less	190	65	47	16	10	3	9	3	37	13	293	100
\$50 or More	111	60	44	24	3	1	5	3	22	12	185	100
6. Convicted of Felony												
Yes	51	65	11	14	1	1	3	4	13	16	79	100
No	1762	84	192	9	33	2	26	1	91	4	2104	100
7. Youthful Offender (RA only)												
Yes	1	10	4	40	-	-	1	10	4	40	10	100
No	67	63	21	19	6	6	3	3	10	9	107	100

Table 2 (Cont)

Variable	Honorable		Hon.-CM		General		Gen.-CM		Unfav.		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8. Imprisoned for Crime (RA only)												
Yes	1	33	1	33	-	-	-	-	1	33	3	100
No	302	63	88	19	14	3	14	3	59	12	477	100
9. Suspended Sentence (RA only)												
Yes	-	-	2	29	-	-	1	14	4	57	7	100
No	304	64	89	19	14	3	13	2	56	12	476	100
10. Service Preference (US only)												
Army or no Preference	788	87	68	8	13	1	9	1	30	3	908	100
Other Services	222	91	14	6	4	2	3	1	1	-	244	100
11. Marital Status												
Single	1352	86	120	8	17	1	17	1	59	4	1565	100
Married	305	86	27	8	8	2	3	1	11	3	354	100
12. Change in Marital Status												
Yes	285	84	32	9	5	2	1	-	16	5	339	100
No	1303	87	108	7	20	1	20	1	52	4	1503	100
13. No. of Dependents												
None	1329	82	145	9	24	2	21	1	92	6	1611	100
1 or more	338	83	49	12	8	2	5	1	10	2	410	100
14. Psychiatric Appraisal (S of PULHES)												
No Psychiatric Disorders	1771	83	200	10	31	1	28	1	104	5	2134	100
Mild transient or chronic Disorder	47	84	3	6	3	6	1	2	1	2	55	100

Table 2 (Cont)

Variable	Honorable		Hon.-CM		General		Gen.-CM		Unfav.		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15. No. of Phys. Complaints of Psychosomatic Nature												
2 or Less	1228	81	155	10	23	1	25	2	93	6	1524	100
3 or More	578	89	45	7	8	1	4	1	12	2	647	100
16. Years of Education												
11 years or Less	1191	78	185	12	31	2	29	2	94	6	1530	100
12 or More	619	96	15	2	3	1	-	-	8	1	645	100
17. Physical Category												
Category 1	1386	83	166	10	25	1	22	1	80	5	1679	100
Other than Category 1	433	85	37	7	9	2	7	1	25	5	511	100

REFERENCE

Morton, Mary A., Goldstein, L. G., Houston, T. J., and Bayroff, A. G.
Predicting proficiency of enlisted men of limited ability.
PRB Technical Research Report 1099. February 1957.